STUMPTOWN™

GREG RUCKA • JUSTIN GREENWOOD • RYAN HILL

The Case of a Cup of Joe: Part Two

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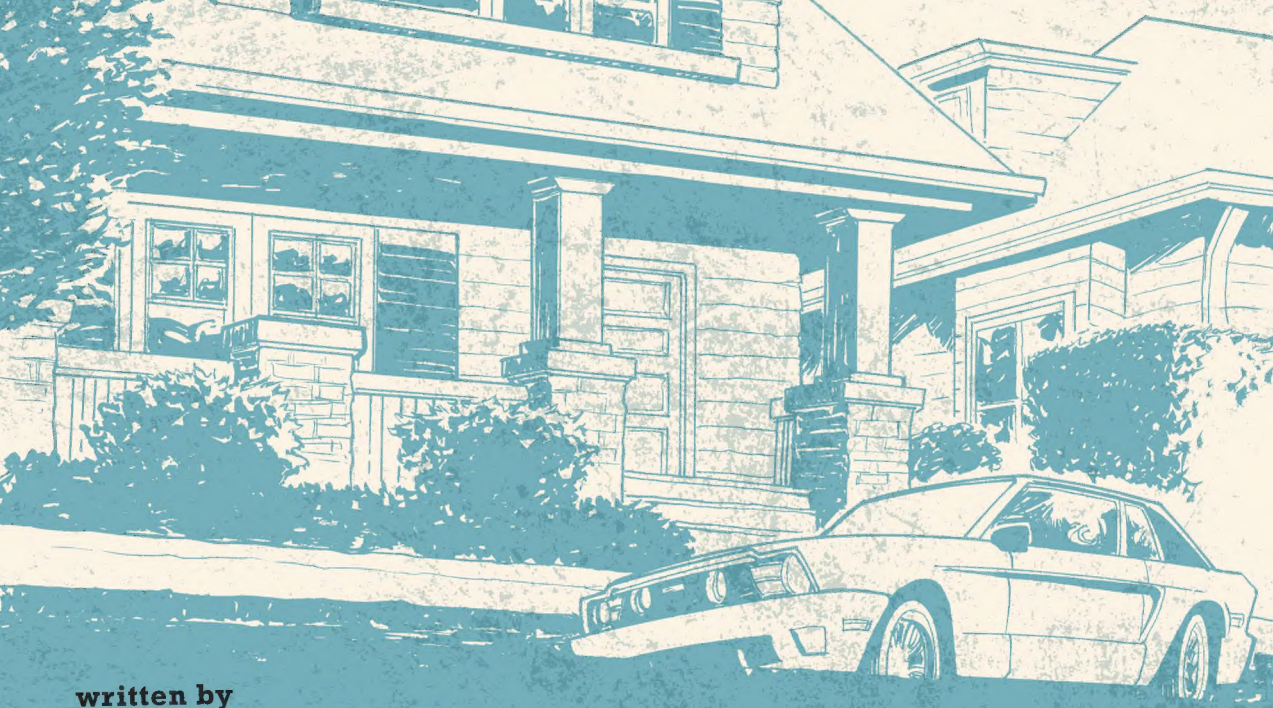

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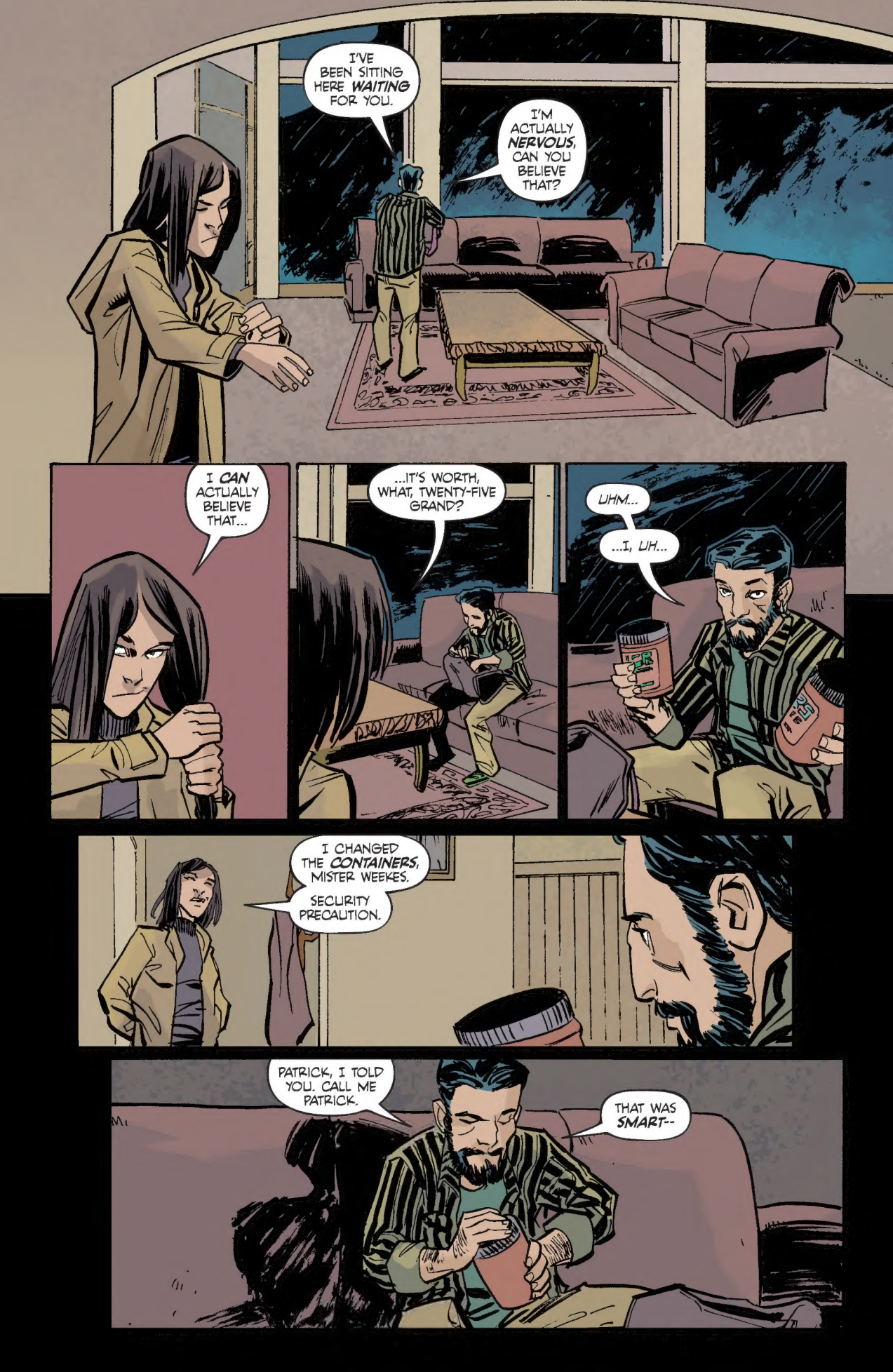
YOU HAVE IT?
TAKE A LOOK.


I'VE BEEN SITTING HERE WAITING FOR YOU.
I'M ACTUALLY NERVOUS, CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?
I CAN ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT...
...IT'S WORTH, WHAT, TWENTY-FIVE GRAND?
UHM...
...I, UH...
I CHANGED THE CONTAINERS, MISTER WEEKES.
SECURITY PRECAUTION.
PATRICK, I TOLD YOU. CALL ME PATRICK.
THAT WAS SMART--

--OHHH...
DEX.
DEX DEX DEX--

FUCKING PERFECT!
SORRY.
I GET... I'M A LITTLE PASSIONATE ABOUT MY WORK.
I CAN SEE THAT.
I'M GONNA ROAST SOME OF THESE.
YOU HAVE TO STAY FOR COFFEE.
YOU'LL STAY FOR COFFEE?
SURE.

THAT IS A GOOD CUP OF COFFEE.
IT'S... NICE, SURE.
HEATHEN.
SO THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW.
THERE WAS SOMEBODY ELSE VERY INTERESTED IN GETTING YOUR CAT-SHIT COFFEE.
CIVET-FARMED KOPI LUWAK, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
I TOLD YOU THERE'D BE OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.
WELL THIS INTERESTED PARTY SENT AN ODDBALL TO MY OFFICE YESTERDAY AFTER I'D MET WITH YOU.
SAID ODDBALL OFFERED-BY-PROXY TO PAY ME TWENTY GRAND FOR EIGHT OUNCES OF YOUR BEANS. IN GOLD COINS.

I BRING THIS UP NOW SO YOU KNOW I'M NOT TRYING TO SHAKE YOU DOWN FOR MORE MONEY.
BECAUSE I OBVIOUSLY TURNED HIM DOWN.
I APPRECIATE THAT. THIS PROXY--
WAIT, IT GETS BETTER.
I WAS FOLLOWED FROM THE AIRPORT TONIGHT.
TWO MEN, PURE PDX-HIPSTERS. I THOUGHT AT FIRST THEY WERE WITH THE PROXY, BUT THINKING ABOUT IT ON MY WAY OVER HERE, I'M NOT SO SURE.
THE... AESTHETIC DOESN'T MATCH.
THIS PROXY, TALL AND THIN?
WORE WHITE?
CALLED HIMSELF MISTER DOVE.
PUT HIS EMPLOYER ON SPEAKERPHONE TO MAKE THE OFFER.
LAIDLAW.
WAIT, THE TECH GUY? WHY WOULD HE WANT YOUR COFFEE?
BECAUSE, SPEAKING AS A RICH MAN MYSELF, YOU GET USED TO GETTING WHAT YOU WANT.
BUT WHEN YOU'RE AN APPALLINGLY RICH MAN, "NO" ISN'T A WORD YOU EVER HEAR.
HE TRIED TO BUY MY STOCK, THE FARM, ALL OF IT, LAST YEAR.
AND I SAID NO.

HE'S WORTH... I MEAN, NO OFFENSE, BUT HE MAKES YOU LOOK LIKE A PAUPER.
IF LAIDLAW WANTS CAT-SHIT COFFEE, WHY DOESN'T HE JUST PAY TO MAKE IT HIMSELF?
HE DOESN'T WANT KOPI LUWAK, DEX.
HE WANTS MY KOPI LUWAK.
AS TO THE OTHER TWO, I DON'T KNOW. THE BARISTA MAFIA, MAYBE.
THE WHAT-HEY-NOW?
PROBABLY NOTHING.
LISTEN, I'VE ANOTHER SHIPMENT, SAME AS THIS ONE, SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY A WEEK FROM TODAY.
WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HANDLE THAT ONE AS WELL?
WHY NOT?

ANSEL?
IT'S PAST TWO IN THE MORNING, WHAT'RE YOU STILL DOING UP?

Y-YOU'RE BACK.

YOU'VE GOT WORK IN THE MORNING, ANSEL, YOU'VE GOT TO GET YOUR SLEEP.
I KNOW, I KNOW.
...I J-J-JUST...

JUST WHAT? DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
...I C-CAN'T SLEEP W-WHEN WHEN WHEN NOBODY AND IT'S SCARY DEX!
IT'S SCARY W-WH-WHE-WHEN I'M ALONE!

WHERE'S FUJI, ANSEL?

...COME IN FOR A DRINK...
THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU HAD ROOMMATES...

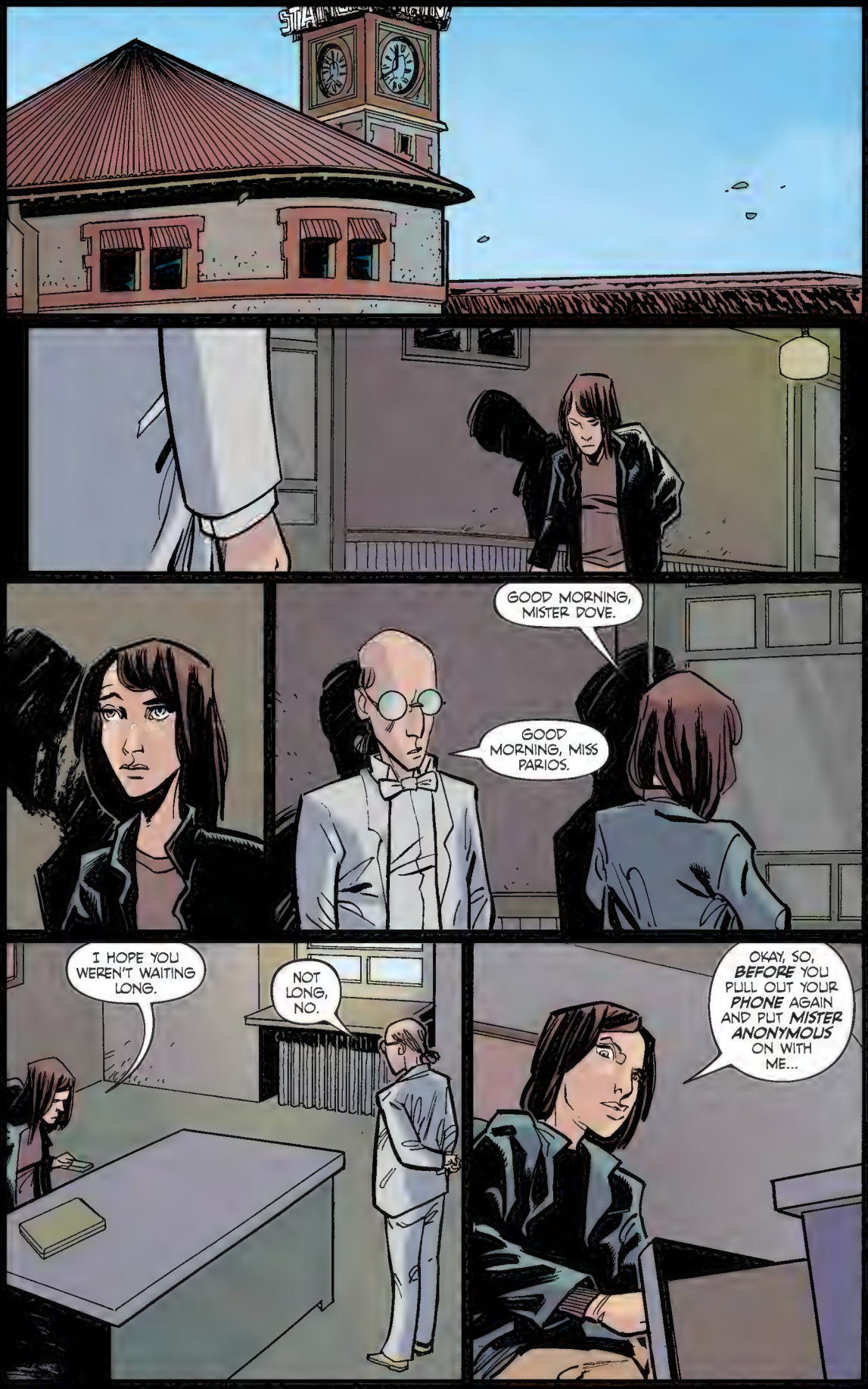
...I MEAN IF YOU'RE SURE--
THEY WON'T CARE, IT'LL BE FINE--
GET OUT.
DEX? I THOUGHT YOU--
HE LEAVES.
NOW.
I GUESS YOU BETTER GO.
SOME OTHER TIME, OKAY?
OH.
YEAH, OKAY...
...CALL ME SOMETIME?

I PUT MY THINGS IN THE GUEST ROOM.
AT LEAST I PRESUMED IT WAS THE GUEST ROOM, IT WAS KINDA CLUTTERED IN THERE--
YOU LEFT ANSEL ALONE.
IS THAT WHY YOU'RE SUDDENLY FULL BITCH?
YOU SAID TO MAKE SURE ANSEL GOT DINNER. YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT ME NEEDING TO BABYSIT HIM.
I FIGURED YOU'D BE BACK SOON, AND HE'S A BIG BOY, HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.
SERIOUSLY, IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAD TO GO TO "WORK," NOT ME.
YOU KNOW, AS FAR AS THAT GOES, YOU REALLY SHOULD BE TAKING BETTER CARE OF HIM.
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN FEEDING HIM, ANYWAY? HE'S PUT ON TEN POUNDS SINCE I LAST SAW HIM.
I WENT THROUGH YOUR KITCHEN AND I COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING THAT WAS GLUTEN-FREE...

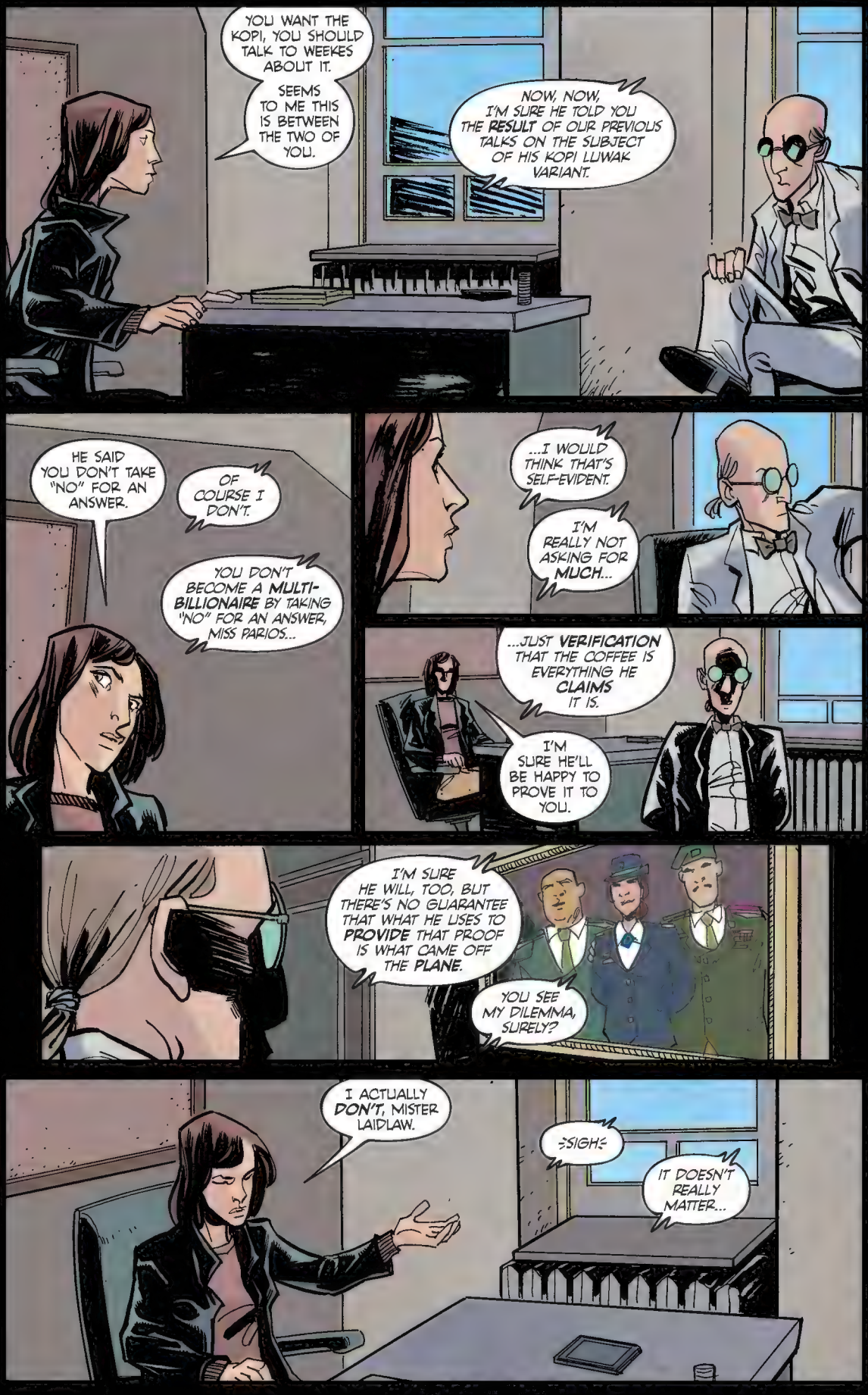
...OR WASN'T PRE-PACKAGED...
...AND YOU'RE SMOKING AROUND HIM, TOO, SERIOUSLY, DEX...
...YOU REALLY NEED TO BE MORE CONSCIENTIOUS OF HIS NEEDS...
...I MEAN YOU'RE...
...YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE...
...FOR HIM...
YES, I AM.
UNLIKE YOU.
OR MOM.
OR DAD.
I EXPECT YOU OUT OF HERE IN THE MORNING, FUJI.

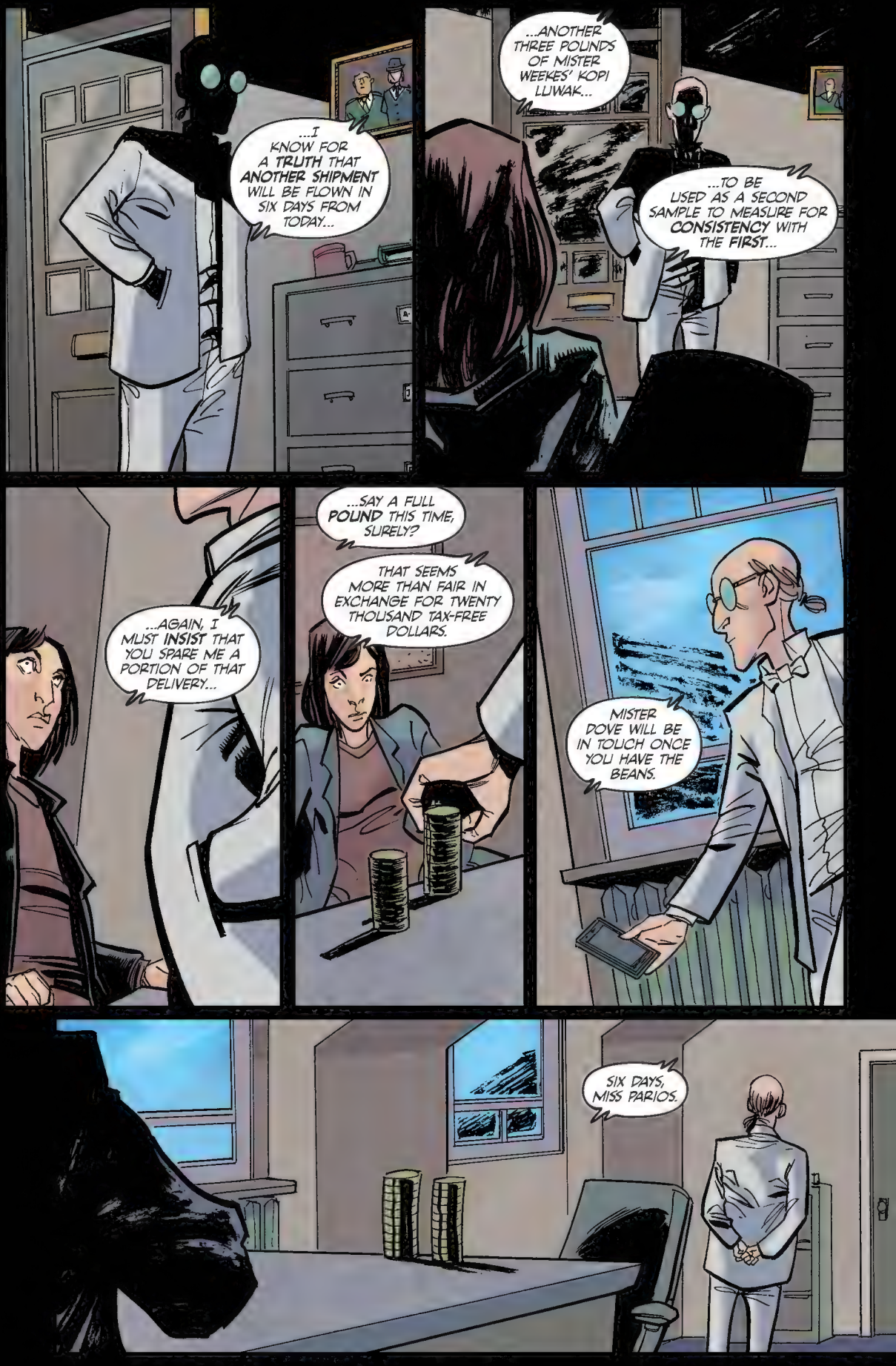
HA HAH HAH HA!
SO THEN I SAID, I MAY BE CHEAP, BUT I'M NOT EASY!
HA HAH HAH HA!!

DEX!
FUJI GOT DOUGHNUTS!
DEX.
DEX! HEY, GOOD MORNING, SLEEPYHEAD!
ACTUALLY, GREY GOT THE DOUGHNUTS AT MY REQUEST.
NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE SUGAR TO GET THE DAY STARTED RIGHT!
RIGHT?
HEY, ANSEL, YOU READY TO GO TO WORK?
FIGURED WE COULD TAKE THE BUS TOGETHER IF YOU LIKE, THEN I'LL GO SIGHTSEEING.
ARMY
I CAN GIVE YOU GUYS A LIFT, IF YOU WANT.
YES! PLEASE!
THAT'S VERY SWEET OF YOU, GREY, THANK YOU!
WE'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT, DEX!
ARMY


GOOD MORNING, MISTER DOVE.
GOOD MORNING, MISS PARIOS.
I HOPE YOU WEREN'T WAITING LONG.
NOT LONG, NO.
OKAY, SO, BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR PHONE AGAIN AND PUT MISTER ANONYMOUS ON WITH ME...

...HERE'S THE MONEY YOU OFFERED YESTERDAY.
AND WHICH I DID NOT ACCEPT BUT RATHER HAVE BEEN HOLDING, AS I NEVER AGREED TO PERFORM SERVICES FOR YOU OR YOUR EMPLOYER...
...MISTER LAIDLAW.
MOST PEOPLE WOULD THINK TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS IN EXCHANGE FOR EIGHT OUNCES OF RAW COFFEE BEANS TO BE VERY EASY MONEY, INDEED.
YOU'RE EITHER PRINCIPLED OR AN IDIOT, MISS PARIOS.
YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME BLUSH, MISTER LAIDLAW.
NO PRIZES FOR CLEVERNESS. I'M SURE PATRICK TOLD YOU I WAS INTERESTED WHEN YOU MADE THE DELIVERY LAST NIGHT.


YOU WANT THE KOPI, YOU SHOULD TALK TO WEEKES ABOUT IT.
SEEMS TO ME THIS IS BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU.
NOW, NOW, I'M SURE HE TOLD YOU THE **RESULT** OF OUR PREVIOUS TALKS ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS KOPI LUWAK VARIANT.
HE SAID YOU DON'T TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER.
OF COURSE I DON'T.
YOU DON'T BECOME A **MULTI-BILLIONAIRE** BY TAKING "NO" FOR AN ANSWER, MISS PARIOS...
...I WOULD THINK THAT'S SELF-EVIDENT.
I'M REALLY NOT ASKING FOR **MUCH**...
...JUST **VERIFICATION** THAT THE COFFEE IS EVERYTHING HE **CLAIMS** IT IS.
I'M SURE HE'LL BE HAPPY TO PROVE IT TO YOU.
I'M SURE HE WILL, TOO, BUT THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT WHAT HE USES TO **PROVIDE** THAT PROOF IS WHAT CAME OFF THE **PLANE**.
YOU SEE MY DILEMMA, SURELY?
I ACTUALLY **DON'T**, MISTER LAIDLAW.
=SIGH=
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER...


...I KNOW FOR A TRUTH THAT ANOTHER SHIPMENT WILL BE FLOWN IN SIX DAYS FROM TODAY...
...ANOTHER THREE POUNDS OF MISTER WEEKES' KOPI LUWAK...
...TO BE USED AS A SECOND SAMPLE TO MEASURE FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE FIRST...
...AGAIN, I MUST INSIST THAT YOU SPARE ME A PORTION OF THAT DELIVERY...
...SAY A FULL POUND THIS TIME, SURELY?
THAT SEEMS MORE THAN FAIR IN EXCHANGE FOR TWENTY THOUSAND TAX-FREE DOLLARS.
MISTER DOVE WILL BE IN TOUCH ONCE YOU HAVE THE BEANS.
SIX DAYS, MISS PARIOS.

--BROKE, WOULD IT BE OKAY IF I BORROWED YOURS?
NO.
DEX. YOU'RE JUST BEING CONTRARY.
THESE HAD DUST ON THEM, YOU DON'T EVEN WEAR THEM!
NOT "NO YOU CAN'T BORROW THEM," FUJI.
"NO," AS IN, "I HAVE TO WORK TONIGHT, I NEED YOU TO STAY HERE WITH ANSEL."
I MADE PLANS, DEX.
AND I TOLD YOU THIS YESTERDAY, AND THE DAY BEFORE, AND THE DAY BEFORE THAT.
WELL, HOW LATE WILL YOU BE?
I DON'T KNOW, IT DEPENDS.
ON WHAT?
ON WHETHER OR NOT I RUN INTO TROUBLE.
MAKE SURE ANSEL HAS DINNER.

OH, FOR THE LOVE OF...
ARE WE *REALLY* GOING TO DO THIS *AGAIN*, GUYS?
WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO FUCK YOU UP, LADY!
JUST GIVE US THE *BEANS!*
NO.
C'MON, YOU'RE NOT FOOLING US THE *SAME* WAY *TWICE*--
BLAMM

DUDE...
...DUDE...
...DUDE!
JESUS, NOT AGAIN.
DUDE! OUR PANTS, DUDE!
MY PANTS NOW...
...DUDE.

THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES
NEXT MONTH...
The Case of a Cup of Joe
Part Three